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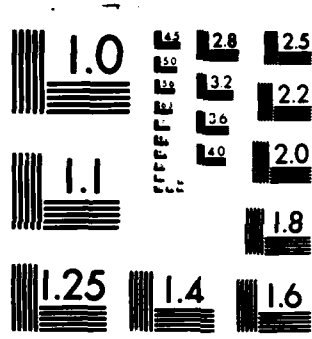
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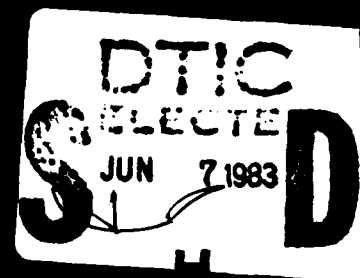
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USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM

ARMS CONTROL--PAST, PRESENT, AND ITS POTENTIAL  
USEFULNESS IN THE FUTURE

INDIVIDUAL ESSAY

by

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18 April 1983

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# ABSTRACT

**AUTHOR:** Stanley Kwieciak, Jr., LTC, FA

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## I

Since the conclusion of World War II and the advent of the nuclear age, there has been a great proliferation of nuclear weapons. This has led to considerable concern and anxiety on the part of many people and nations, and has been recently manifested in several ways--through the nuclear freeze movement in the United States and more vociferously through large demonstrations in Europe.

The two nations which have taken the lead in nuclear weapon deployments have been the United States and the Soviet Union. The ideologies, purposes, and intentions of these nations are opposed to one another resulting in both nations viewing each other as a principal threat. This adds to the fears and concerns of the rest of the world. Despite this situation, the leaders of both the United States and Soviet Union have been rational men who recognize for their own separate and distinct reasons the need to somehow limit the continued proliferation of nuclear weapons. Thus, arms control efforts dealing with strategic and more recently theater nuclear weapons have been ongoing between the United States and Soviet Union since the late sixties. This paper will focus on the main arms control efforts: SALT I, SALT II, Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START), and the Intermediate Nuclear Force Negotiations (INF).

## II

What essentially is the reason for both sides initiating negotiations in the late sixties? It is probably accurate to assume that given the growing arsenals of both the United States and the Soviet Union, the United



States was becoming very concerned about the possibility that its deterrent strategy, particularly in a crisis situation, was eroding. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, was in a strategic sense, very desirous of being recognized as truly an equal partner of the other superpower--the United States. John Newhouse probably gave a most succinct explanation in his book "Cold Dawn":

The talks were launched, not from a common impulse to reduce armaments, but from a mutual need to solemnize the parity principle--or, put differently, to establish an acceptance by each side of the other's ability to inflict unacceptable retribution in response to a nuclear strike. . . . Thus, each may recognize that an unlimited arms race would undermine deterrence--and, hence stability--conceivably by allowing one side or the other to acquire a margin of superiority that in turn would create risks of a first strike. But additionally, a failure to set limits could mean sustaining indefinitely the push for more and better nuclear arms, with costs driven upward--possibly at the expense of other priorities.

Before arms control negotiations could start, however, the United States had to develop an approach--a "SALT position." Given the nature of the negotiations, this was not an easy chore. Of concern, was gaining acceptance by the Department of Defense--and in particular the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Up to this point, the uniformed military leadership did not object to efforts such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and a partial test ban treaty. After all, there was no direct impact on weapons systems that were planned for deployment. However, the new negotiations were being directed on systems (i.e., anti-ballistic missile system, strategic offensive system) in which the services had a vested interest. The Army was concerned about losing Safeguard, its planned anti-ballistic missile system; the Air Force was concerned about its ICBM force, and in particular the deployment of Multiple Independent Reentry Vehicles (MIRVs) on Minuteman III missiles; the Navy was equally concerned about its Poseidon/missiles designed to replace Polaris missiles. Given the fear of the unknown (i.e., future

negotiated outcomes), there was considerable validity to the Chiefs concerns. From the Chiefs point of view, these systems were essential to insure a credible deterrence.

The rest of the policymakers--the National Security Council Staff, State Department, and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), were greatly concerned. They recognized, at the outset, that without the support of the Joint Chiefs, a treaty would never be ratified by the Senate. Thus they set out to abate the Chief's concerns and bring them "on board."

To understand how the Chiefs were brought "on board," one has to understand how policy is formulated in the Interagency. Various administrations over the years have varied the approach, but the basic mechanism has generally remained the same. At the lowest working level, the agency players consist of representatives from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the State Department, ACDA, and the CIA. They are nominally chaired by a staff analyst from the National Security Council Staff. At this working group level, problems and issues are addressed, papers are developed and debated, options for the decision maker are crafted. The next level (known over the years by various names: e.g., the Verification Panel and the Standing Coordination Committee) consists of the heads of each agency and is chaired by the National Security Advisor. They are empowered to make policy decisions of relative importance. However, the significant decisions are reserved for the National Security Council. The NSC consist of the same players with one exception. It is chaired by the President. At this level, the members of the council play the role of counselor and advisor. The President is the sole decision maker.

Once decisions are made, policy which emerges is translated into instructions requiring specific action by either a delegation or a higher

level negotiator such as a Secretary of State. As an aside, it should be noted that such instructions, normally drafted by an NSC staffer and approved by the Interagency, are very explicit and permit little deviation by a negotiator. Exceeding instructions has always been grounds for dismissal by a President.

While the policy mechanism outlined above appears to be clear-cut, it is not always followed in such a manner. Such was the case in gaining the needed JCS support for the initial SALT position. A key person who engineered the JCS support was a young staffer from the Office of the Secretary of Defense named Morton Halperin. He established a SALT committee and obtained authority from the Secretary of Defense, Clark Clifford, to be the main Defense Department coordinating agent for all matters related to SALT. Thus with his newly attained legitimacy and authority, he set out to bring the Chiefs under his wing.

Halperin established his strategy and set the tone for the first meeting of the groups, in which he unveiled the ACDA-State Department paper that he had largely written himself. The job, he said in effect, was to respond to that proposal, not to offer another. The group could modify the proposal and add caveats; failing agreement, the group might even reject the proposal, but Halperin stressed its clear duty to send something to the President in a reasonable period of time.<sup>2</sup>

The strategy was not to undertake any specific numerical limits on ABM systems and not to foreclose the MIRV systems the Air Force and Navy were about to flight test. Halperin's group was sensitive to the fact that the Chiefs could reject the whole package. Thus, the Chiefs, while it appeared that they were being browbeaten in to a SALT position, were in fact, whether or not they realized it, in the drivers seat. With a basic inter-agency position that would not foreclose MIRV testing and initially would not set numerical ABM limits, the Chiefs began a comprehensive deliberation. Meeting in the "tank," (the JCS conference room) for three and one

half days, they finally concurred in an overall position. Once the Chiefs were, in principle, on board, a detailed position could be worked out. It was at this point that our government was moving toward the opening of a major arms control negotiation with its prime adversary. Nevertheless, while there was a consensus in an approach, there was considerable trepidation about the future.

Precisely because SALT was a novel and major departure in great power relations, it was mired in uncertainty. Nothing in America's experience with the Soviet Union on lesser matters suggested other than that the talks would be long, arduous, and quite possibly useless. On any issue, the Soviet interest could be defined in two ways. Take parity for example. Since it hadn't really been achieved, the Russians had a presumed incentive to use SALT as an extended talkathon during which they could catch up. On the other hand, a formal halt or slowdown of the arms race might deter a new administration, very possibly Republican, from recapturing a more visible United States lead.<sup>3</sup>

### III

Over a period of approximately three years, the United States and the Soviet Union negotiated SALT I. This resulted in both sides signing in May 1972, a Treaty to Limit Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM) and an Interim Agreement Limiting Strategic Offensive Arms.

The ABM treaty resulted in the following:

- Both sides would be limited to only one ABM deployment area. The area would be so restricted that one side could not have a nationwide ABM defense. The United States chose to deploy a system around its ICBM sites in the North Central United States and the Soviet Union picked its national capital, Moscow, as its deployment area.

- Precise quantitative and qualitative limits were established. At each site, no more than 100 interceptor missiles and 100 launchers could be deployed. Additionally, there was an agreed limit on the number of radars

which could be deployed as well as agreement on the characteristics a deployed radar could have.

- Both sides agreed to limit qualitative improvements of their ABM technology. Specifically the sides are prohibited from developing, testing, and deploying new types of advanced ABM systems. This, however, does not preclude research into new types of systems and the US has had a very active research effort conducted by the Army's Ballistic Missile Defense Office.

- To preclude circumvention of the treaty, both sides agreed to prohibit the development, testing, or deployment of sea based, air based, or space based ABM systems and their components as well as a mobile land based system.

- The treaty established a United States-Soviet Standing Consultative Commission. The commission's purpose is to promote the objectives and further the implementation of the treaty. To this end, the Commission developed several protocols to the treaty which address complex and detailed procedures such as how deployed systems would be dismantled. Additionally, and perhaps more significantly, the commission has been the forum for addressing issues of compliance. Having such a forum provides a basis for raising issues, insuring compliance and enhancing confidence between the sides. It should be noted that several questions and concerns have, over the years, been raised by both sides. However, in all cases, additional information was exchanged or the activity in question ceased, thus allaying the concern of the other side.

- Finally the treaty provided that it would be reviewed five years after entry into force and every five years thereafter. A review of the treaty recently occurred and neither side proposed any changes to the basic document.

The Interim Agreement, focused on the strategic offensive weapons of both sides. It was to be of limited duration and scope. The agreement would last for only five years and would provide the basis for a more comprehensive follow-on negotiations (SALT II). It included the following main points.

- Both sides agreed to freeze at existing levels the number of strategic ballistic missile launchers which were operational or under construction. However, launchers under construction could be completed.

- Each side was permitted an increase in submarine launched ballistic missiles (SLBM) launchers up to an agreed level. Upon exceeding the agreed level, each side agreed to dismantle older ICBM or SLBM launchers.

- With the prohibition on building new launchers for ICBMs, the relocation of existing launchers was in effect prohibited. This was essential in the United States view because it prevented the Soviets from replacing older missiles such as the large SS-9 with modern, more accurate and powerful large ballistic missiles. This along with the United States technological lead would compensate for the numerical symmetry in land based missiles launchers (1618 Soviet vs 1054 United States) favoring the Soviets. However, as we shall see later, the Soviets solved that problem by simply replacing the SS-9 with the MIRVed SS-18 Modern Large Ballistic Missile. (MLBM). Since they used the same SS-9 launchers, there was no violation of the agreement.

- The agreement did not ban the deployment of mobile ICBM launchers. Of interest, the Soviets opposed a ban which was being pushed by the United States. Today, the United States maintains an opposite position. Given the current vulnerability of our land based missile force, the mobile option provides a means for deploying land based ICBMs in a survivable mode. To foreclose such an option would not be in the United States interest.

When signed in May 1972, these arms control agreements marked a major milestone in the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union. It was particularly significant from the United States point of view, since at the time we were trying to extract ourselves from Vietnam and we were desperately in need of a foreign policy triumph.

However, the question that was being asked in many quarters of our government, was the ABM treaty and the Interim Agreement truly a United States triumph, and more importantly, did the United States get a good deal? Looking back with twelve years of history in the interim, it probably is correct to maintain that the United States achieved an acceptable deal. This view can be based on the fact that the strategic balance, while shifting in favor of the Soviet Union, generally remains, and the dialogue that has occurred has contributed to some degree in maintaining a stable relationship. Nevertheless, at the time when the treaty was agreed, there were many concerns expressed from both within and outside our government. These concerns were and continue to remain valid.

The first concern was the technological lead the United States gave up when it agreed not to deploy a nationwide ABM system. Clearly the Soviets were well behind in ABM development and thus, many argued that the leadership in the United States intimidated by the growing Soviet buildup, particularly in offensive systems, willingly abrogated our technological lead--for the sake of arms control. Others argued that on a strategic level, deployment of defensive systems linked with already deployed strategic offensive systems are destabilizing. Of particular concern, during a crisis situation, one side could launch a preemptive strike because it feared the other side's capability. On the other hand, the side with the superior defensive capability could launch a first strike without fear of

an unacceptable retaliatory strike. In either case, the point is, that an effective ABM system would have a detrimental effect on the strategic balance and makes a first-strike option a plausible one. It is, by the way, the opinion of the author, that the latter point is valid. It should be kept in mind as our nation looks to the future and considers deployment of space based ABM systems.

A second concern was the willingness of the United States to accept the Soviets as a strategic equal. This was, many believe, a Soviet objective which they in fact achieved. To the rest of the world, SALT I legitimized the Soviets as an equal superpower. It also created concerns that the United States, which only ten to fifteen years before, was the strategically superior power, had demonstrated its weakness and a lack of resolve. With SALT II to follow, the concerns only grew. The United States, many perceived, was suffering from humiliating defeat in Vietnam. Tired of war, it was only too willing to look inward and depart from its position as a leader of the free world.

The third concern was the manner in which the sides viewed arms control.

Western representatives tend to view arms control largely in a bipolar context and focus primarily on the United States-Soviet strategic balance as it would affect war-avoidance or, at most, physical survival after an actual nuclear exchange. Soviet representatives regard arms control as one of the many facets of a multipolar global policy and strategy, and evaluate the United States-Soviet balance in terms of its effect on the Soviet freedom of action to achieve the USSR's overall political goals by means short of a full-scale military conflict between the superpowers, if at all possible, but, if unavoidable, through a war-waging and war-winning capability. Sidestepping, for the moment, the emotion laden, normative aspects of this question, the difference simply reflects the traditional contrast between a satisfied state striving to maintain the territorial and power status quo and confined, therefore, to an essentially defensive and static approach, and a revisionist state, aspiring to revise the political landscape of the world or, at least, the distribution of global power, and pursuing, therefore, a basically dynamic and offensive strategy.<sup>4</sup>



This leads to the fourth concern. The Interim Agreement did not include any qualitative constraints. Thus, with only quantitative limits, the Soviets merely transferred their effort from building more to building better systems. With the advent of the MIRV, the Soviets launched into a vast modernization of their land based and sea based forces. Soon to be deployed were many new Soviet systems with tremendously greater capability to replace older systems. This included among other systems, the SS-17, SS-18, SS-19 ICMB systems and the Typhoon-class submarine. All of these destabilizing systems were deployed without any violation of the SALT accords. Needless to say, these activities were not in the spirit of SALT I and raised serious doubts about future arms control efforts. Many in fact, felt that the United States was "had" at the negotiating table.

The next concern had to do with the manner of the negotiation. Deliberations occurred in two fronts: in a formal manner at the negotiating table in Helsinki and through a "backchannel" system between Kissinger and either Dobrynin (the Soviet Ambassador to the US) or Kosygin (the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs). If coordinated, such an approach provides important advantages. When problems arise that a negotiating team can't solve, the informal backchannel system permits such problems to be handled in a candid and frank manner. Moreover, when those involved have authority, i.e., they speak directly for their head of state, obstacles can be quickly overcome. However, if such an approach is uncoordinated, it can have the potential for disaster. This appears to be the case during SALT I. Dr. Kissinger's efforts were done independent and in many instances without the knowledge of Ambassador Gerard Smith, Chief United States negotiator. Needless to say, such lack of coordination resulted in considerable frustration on the part of the delegation. Ambassador Smith, at one point, sent a message to Kissinger stating:

at best, ignorance can be an embarrassing and even demeaning thing in this business; at worst it can be prejudicial to effective work at the front.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to a frustrated delegation, a growing mistrust was developing in the interagency due to these uncoordinated Kissinger efforts. Clearly, the backchannel approach circumvented the policy formulation mechanism. Despite these frustrations, Kissinger continued with his backchannel efforts with the full concurrence of President Nixon. The primary motivation was to eliminate newsleaks at sensitive junctures of the negotiation. Additionally, as the negotiation was about to conclude, the President, as Kissinger recounts, was insistent that he be given the main credit for this arms control milestone.<sup>6</sup>

The final concern centered around our allies perception of our efforts. Walter Hahn and Wynfred Joshua were almost prophetic when in 1972 they conjectured that:

From the European vantage point, the significance of SALT has been interpreted as:

- a. The symbolic seal upon strategic nuclear parity between the United States and the Soviet Union.
- b. The desire by the United States to stabilize the nuclear relationship with the Soviet Union even at the price of numerical inferiority, and at the potential sacrifice of alliance interest;
- c. The prospect of a possible "decoupling" of the American strategic deterrent from the defense of Western Europe; and
- d. In the context of other trends, the harbinger of a more general military retrenchment from Europe.<sup>7</sup>

These are perceptions that remain very real today and in fact have resulted in the current European insistence on United States deploying theater nuclear forces (Pershing II missiles and ground launched cruise missiles).

All of these concerns had an effect in the Senate which was responsible for treaty ratification. To gain concurrence from Congress, the

Nixon administration accepted the congressional view known as the Jackson Amendment. Although several points were made in the amendment, the key one was that:

The Congress recognizes the principle of the United States-Soviet Union equality reflected in the anti-ballistic missile treaty, and urges and requests the President to seek a future treaty that, inter alia, would not limit the United States to levels of intercontinental strategic forces inferior to the limits provided for the Soviet Union; and the Congress considers that the success of these agreements and the attainment of more permanent and comprehensive agreements are dependent upon the maintenance under present world conditions of a vigorous research and development and modernization program as required by a prudent strategic posture.

Passage of this amendment not only allayed the concerns of the Senate but also provided guidance to the administration for future negotiations. Additionally, it provided some relief for the Joint Chiefs of Staff who were particularly concerned about the strategic direction in which the United States was headed.

Thus, SALT I was ratified by the Senate. It was with great joy mixed with trepidation, the United States launched into SALT II in an effort to further control strategic offensive arms.

#### IV

SALT II was a very detailed, comprehensive, and complex negotiation. Thus, it took considerably longer to complete. In fact, the negotiation took well over five years and spanned three administrations--Nixon, Ford, and Carter. Each administration had its own perspective of arms control and this further complicated achieving an agreement in a timely manner. Nevertheless, in June 1978, the treaty was finalized and agreed to by the heads of each state--President Carter and Mr. Brezhnev.

SALT II, as previously noted, addressed quantitative and qualitative constraints on strategic offensive systems possessed by both the United States and the Soviet Union. It consisted of three parts:

- A basic treaty which would be in force until 1985. The treaty addressed the fundamental concerns of both sides.
- A protocol of about three years duration which included limited constraints on weapon systems. Both sides agreed that further negotiations would be required on these systems.
- A Joint Statement of Principles which established guidelines for follow on negotiations--targeted at deep reductions of strategic offensive systems.

The Treaty included several numerical limits and bans prohibiting certain activities by the sides. The numerical limitations were:

- Each side agreed to an equal number (2400) of strategic nuclear delivery vehicles (SNDVs) i.e., ICBM and SCBM launchers, heavy bombers, and Air to Surface Ballistic Missiles (ASBMs). This initial limit would be subsequently lowered to 2250 by the end of 1981.
- There would be a MIRV launcher sublimit of 1320. The sublimit included launchers of MIRVed ballistic missiles and heavy bombers with long-range cruise missiles.
- There would be a further sublimit of 1200 of the total number of launchers of MIRVed ballistic missiles and within that limit an even further sublimit of 820 launchers of MIRVed ICBMs.

The bans included the following:

- There can be no additional construction of fixed ICBM launchers and, more importantly, no increase in the number of fixed heavy ICBM launchers.
- Launchers for heavy mobile ICBMs and heavy SLBMs and ASBMs are prohibited.

- Flight testing of new ICBMs is prohibited with the exception that each side could test one new ICBM. This permitted the United States to complete the flight testing of the MX ICBM.

- Increasing the number of warheads on existing ICBMs is prohibited. For the new ICBM that was permitted, the sides agreed to a limit of ten warheads. Additionally, for SLBMs, the limit was established at 14 warheads.

- For existing heavy bombers equipped with cruise missiles, there is a limit of 20 long-range cruise missiles per heavy bomber. For new heavy bombers, long-range cruise missiles are limited to an average of 28 per bomber.

- The conversion of light (small) ICBM launchers to heavy (large) ICBM launchers is banned. Ceilings are established on the launch weight and throw weight of the missiles to preclude such a conversion.

- There is a ban on the Soviet SS-16 ICBM.

- There is a ban on rapid reload of ICBM systems. Despite this ban, the Soviet SS-17 and SS-18 ICBM launchers have a "cold launch" capability. This suggests that minimal damage would occur after the initial launch and the Soviets, in a very short period of time could reload those launchers with new missiles.

- There is a ban on certain new types of strategic offensive systems--long-range ballistic missiles on surface ships and ballistic and cruise missiles on the seabeds.

-There is a ban on transferring systems limited by the treaty to third countries and taking those actions which would circumvent the treaty.

Finally, in addition to numerical limits and bans, the treaty protocol, Joint Statement of Principles provided for:

- Advance notification of ICBM test launchers. This facilitated the ability of each side to observe, (through its own National Technical Means-NTM) the testing of new systems. This provision is designed to enhance verification of the treaty.

- An agreed data base which includes all the systems in the various SALT categories.

- Detailed definitions of the systems that the treaty limits.

- Agreement that independent verification through national technical means is essential and that neither side would take action to interfere with the other side's ability to verify the provisions of the treaty. This includes agreement that neither side would use deliberate concealment measures which would impede verification.

- To facilitate verification of MIRV limits, the treaty provides for elaborate "types" rules which link testing of types of MIRVed missiles to deployment. In other words, once a launcher contains or launches (to include a flight test) a MIRVed missile then all launchers of that type of missiles would be included in the 1320 MIRV sublimit.

- The protocol, lasting until December 1981: would have banned deployment of mobile ICBM launchers (development of such systems, however, was permitted); bans deployment but not testing of cruise missiles capable of a range in excess of 600 kilometers; and bans the flight testing and deployment of Air to Surface Missiles.

- The Joint Statement of Principles established a framework for SALT III in both sides would set the following goals: significant reductions in strategic systems, further qualitative limitations; and resolution of the protocol issues.

As the treaty was signed, the debate over its worthiness was in full force. There was clearly a question in the Senate as to whether it would

be ratified. The Carter administration after considerable pressure coupled with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, withdrew the treaty from the Senate and essentially shelved it. As the Reagan administration entered office, it was judged that the treaty was "fatally flawed" and therefore would not resubmit it for Senate consideration. Despite this, the Reagan administration opted to observe the provisions of the treaty in order not to undermine its own arms control efforts.

Precisely what were the objections and, in fact, is it possible that during this arms control effort everyone missed the mark in judging the purpose of arms control and its relation to development of nuclear strategy?

In the Senate, the objections were primarily focused on what the treaty permitted, technical details, verifiability, and lack of confidence in the Carter administration negotiating approach.

In terms of what the treaty permitted, many objected to the provisions which allowed Soviets deployment of Modern Large Ballistic Missiles (MLBMs)--namely the 308 SS-18s. This was and continues to be viewed as a very destabilizing MIRVed ICBM. With Soviet advances in improved missile accuracy and the capability of increasing the currently deployed ten warheads per SS-18 missile to a much greater number, the United States land based missiles are put in a great if not unacceptable risk.

There was also great objection to the level of strategic force modernization that occurred in the Soviet Union during the seventies and which SALT II generally overlooked. This linked with the lack of United States force modernization was of great concern to many Senators.

The Soviets deployed several systems not captured by the treaty which had a potential to give them a great "edge" in the strategic sense. The main systems were the Soviet Backfire Bomber and the SS-20 Intermediate

Range Ballistic Missiles. The Backfire, planned deployment of about 450, has a potential capability to strike the United States. The SS-20 with a third stage--it then becomes an SS-16--could strike targets in the United States.

There were several other objections, but suffice it to say, these were the principal ones which conservative Senators took exception to.

The liberal Senators objected from a different point of view. They maintained that SALT II merely legitimized programs of both sides and made a "sham" of arms control. Their views could be summed as follows:

The real impact of SALT was not to impose the ideas of MAD and stability, but to give them a legitimacy and immunity to challenges they did not deserve. SALT enshrined mutual assured destruction and strategic parity: it made challenges to these ideas fixes illegitimate, irresponsible, and beyond the pale of reasonable debate.<sup>8</sup>

With respect to verification, there were those in the Senate who felt that the treaty was flawed in the sense that it was not adequately verifiable. It should be noted that determining adequate verification is a policy matter rather than an intelligence judgement. In other words, the intelligence community uses its national technical means to collect information which is analyzed in terms of risks to the United States. The policymakers then use the information to make verification judgements. Thus, whether or not the provisions of a treaty are adequately verifiable is a matter of perception and while some policymakers may judge them to be adequately verifiable, others will not have similar judgements.

In terms of the negotiating approach throughout SALT II, there was a question of different approaches and different strategies. Paul Nitze summed it up well by noting that:

(There is) a difference of approach to the negotiations. The purposes of the two sides were discrepant from the outset. We wished for equal limitations designed to diminish the impact of nuclear weapons upon world politics. The Soviet side viewed the



negotiations as an engagement between adversaries. The Soviet task was to achieve the right to that nuclear predominance which we appeared willing to relinquish.<sup>9</sup>

Nitze expressed a further and a very persuasive concern when he noted that:

It is a copybook principle in strategy that, in actual war, advantage tends to go to the side in a better position to raise the stakes by expanding the scope, duration, or destructive intensity of the conflict. By the same token, at junctures of high contention short of war, the side better able to cope with the potential consequences of raising the stakes has the advantage. The other side is the one under greater pressure to scramble for a peaceful way out. To have the advantage at the utmost level of violence helps at every lesser level. In the Korean War, the Berlin Blockades, and the Cuban Missile Crisis the United States had the ultimate edge because of our superiority at the strategic nuclear level. That edge has slipped away.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, there is the question of military participation and support for the treaty. Throughout the negotiating process, the Chiefs, through the Chairman, were active participants in the policy process. In the negotiating process, they were also ably represented by Lieutenant General Edward Rowny--a tough and skilled negotiator.

In the policy arena, the Chiefs were quite concerned about the direction arms control was taking--particularly in terms of the impact it had on major service programs. Additionally, the growing and massive Soviet buildup in strategic and theater offensive nuclear weapons further increased the concern on the part of the Chiefs. Several memorandums were sent through the Secretary of Defense to the President expressing concern and the need to reverse the unfavorable trends. The thrust of most memorandums, however, were focused on limiting Soviet systems such as the Backfire bomber and the SS-18 MLBMs and keeping options open to deploy programmed systems such as cruise missiles, the MX ICBM in an alternate basing mode etc. While this made eminent military sense, it was advice absent an arms control solution, and therefore not always accepted by other

agencies such as the Arms Control Disarmament Agency (ACDA) or the State Department. Thus the military desires quite often were not met. Nevertheless, when the Chiefs "weighed in" with resolve, their views were listened to by the President. Of particular concern by many of the arms controllers was whether or not the Chiefs would support the Treaty during the ratification process. This potential non-support was a trump card available to the Chiefs. However, in the end, the Chiefs did in fact support the treaty with the reassurance that United States modernization of strategic offensive weapons would proceed with speed. With modernization and arms control limitations on the Soviets, the Chiefs believed that this would go a long way towards redressing the strategic imbalance in deployed forces that was beginning to favor the Soviet Union. Moreover, as time went on, the Chiefs did become strong supporters for the need to continue an arms control effort.

It should be noted, that one senior military officer, Lieutenant General Rowny, did not offer his full support for the treaty. In his testimony to the Senate, Rowny expressed the view that several elements of the treaty should be re-negotiated, i.e., reductions in Soviet SS-18 MLBMs, inclusion of Backfire bombers in the treaty, and a redefinition of cruise missiles, so that only nuclear armed cruise missiles would be counted. Concurrent with his lack of support, he requested retirement from military duty and entered private life only later to emerge as the chief negotiator for the current negotiations.

On balance, SALT II accomplished some things: equal aggregates, a cap on both sides programs, a continued dialogue. Nevertheless, did arms control overshadow the need for development of a nuclear strategy which within arms control limits, truly meet the defense needs of the nation?

To make a judgement, one has to analyze not only how the administration approached the negotiating process, but also the perspective it had. Clearly, during Carter's administration when a majority of SALT II was negotiated, the arms control effort was the centerpiece of United States-Soviet relationship. During the negotiations, SALT was neither linked to any other issues, nor contingent upon the behavior of the Soviet Union in other areas. Thus, SALT took on a life of its own. To achieve an accord was uppermost in the minds of several policymakers in Washington. Once an agreement was achieved, one only has to focus on the debate concerning the merits and disadvantages of the treaty. The focus, if there was one, dealt with technicalities and verification. Very little interest, concern, or debate centered around our nuclear strategy.

This situation however, was not without reason. When the United States entered into serious SALT II negotiations, it did so based on the premise that both sides had enough destructive power to destroy each other (MAD) and that stability must be maintained in the strategic relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union. This premise, therefore limited the perspective of all concerned. The perspective focused on primarily achieving an arms control agreement--because arms control, many believed, would become the major linchpin insuring strategic stability. This, in turn, placed our Defense Department officials on the defensive. Their energies were focused on fighting a rear guard action to protect military procurement programs which the services felt were needed. With such a limited Defense perspective, little thought was given to other potential strategies. One exception to this point of view, was the "countervailing" targeting system which was outlined by Secretary of Defense Harold Brown. Nevertheless, in terms of looking at a nuclear strategy which would have application in the far future, 30-40 years hence, which

would consider the synergistic effect of the planned modernization programs, and which would consider alternatives to MAD and the need for strategic stability, there was very little serious thought. In other words, in SALT II, arms control drove the train at the expense of a coherent nuclear strategy.

As the Reagan administration came into office, the absence of a coherent long-term nuclear strategy (which offered possible alternatives to MAD) linked with the belief that the United States was falling well behind the Soviet Union in strategic capability, raised many questions as to how they would approach arms control.

V

As President Reagan entered office, it was clear that re-evaluation of the direction our nation was headed was required. Such a re-evaluation did occur during the first year Reagan was in office. Emerging from this, the administration decided to reenter into arms control negotiations with the Soviets. However, before plunging into such an effort, certain United States principles were publicly articulated. The United States approach would be to seek agreement that:

- Produce significant reduction in the arsenals of both sides;
- Result in equal levels of arms on both sides, since an unequal agreement, like an unequal balance of forces, can encourage coercion or aggression;
- Are verifiable, because when national security is at stake, agreements cannot be based upon trust alone; and
- Enhance US and allied security and reduce the risk of war, because arms control is not an end in itself but rather a complement to defense preparations as an important means of underwriting peace and international stability.<sup>11</sup>

The principles outlined the beginning of a different perspective and a different approach. Clearly, arms control would no longer be the centerpiece of United States-Soviet relations. Rather, arms control would, as noted in the fourth principle, be "a complement to defense preparations." This is a subtle, yet significant alteration to past United States' perspective. The administration was and is concerned about the emerging instability between the superpowers. This was best summarized in a Chicago Tribune article:

The two superpowers have advanced so far technologically that it is theoretically possible to "Win" a nuclear war--to devastate an opponent in a first strike without being devastated in return. Leaders might, therefore, be tempted to launch a preemptive attack out of fear that the other side will do it first. It becomes a situation of kill or be killed, and that is profoundly dangerous.

That is why the goal of the President should be just what it is: to negotiate reductions in the kinds of weapons that cause the instability. . . . The idea is to get out of the predicament, not negotiate ourselves more deeply into it.<sup>12</sup>

With such a perspective in mind, the Reagan administration entered into a negotiation with the Soviet Union. The name of the negotiations even reflected the administration view--Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START).

The United States opened the negotiation with the following proposal:

- A major reduction in warheads to 5000 would be required. Of these, no more than one-half are permitted on land based missiles.
- A cut in the total number of all ballistic missiles to an equal level, about one-half the current United States level--approximately 850.
- A follow-on phase would include further reductions on other elements of strategic forces--particularly ballistic missile throw-weight.

Clearly this proposal reflects the concern the President and his advisers have for the large destabilizing land based missiles deployed by

the Soviet Union. Of particular concern are the SS-18 MLBMs, of which the Soviets have some 320 deployed. This missile is considered to be the most destabilizing. Moreover, as the Soviets achieve greater degrees of accuracy with their warheads, they have the potential to place smaller but many more effective weapons than the ten currently deployed on each SS-18. Thus, the Soviets have the capability with just the SS-18 to at least seriously threaten the United States land based missile force. Needless to say, this has the potential for causing great instability between the superpowers--particularly in a crisis situation when the superpowers confront one another.

The initial proposal remains and little has been accomplished since the negotiations began. How successful they will be remains to be seen. It should not be anticipated, that the Soviets will be forthcoming. After all, from their perspective the Reagan proposal goes after the heart of their strategic offensive systems. On the other hand, they have not rejected the Reagan approach as being "out of hand." This has some significance since the initial Carter "Comprehensive Proposal" of March 1977 was immediately and totally rejected by the Soviets.

Despite the far-reaching implications of the United States START approach, there are several in the United States who are critical of it. Charles Gellner in a paper presented at the Strategic Studies Institute in October 1982,<sup>13</sup> summarized the general objections:

- The proposal leaves gaps. They do not limit, restrict, or control all Soviet-United States forces. The proposal deals only with warheads and missiles and does not take into account other quantitative and qualitative constraints.

- The proposal will in fact contribute to a destabilized environment. Given the number of warheads that would still be permitted, land based missile vulnerability may in fact increase.

- By placing equal limits on warheads, the United States would forego its lead in the only element of the strategic equation where it has an advantage.

- There are significant verification problems because the proposal counts missiles and not launchers. The ability to count missiles, boosters, warheads etc., is virtually impossible to independently verify through national technical means.

Nevertheless, the START approach is a step which only time will tell whether or not it will be successful. To date, the Soviets have been intransigent and their counteroffer, surprisingly is very similar to the Carter "Comprehensive Proposal" which they rejected in 1977. Their proposal can be summarized as follows:

- SALT II should be the base for future negotiations.
- Both sides should adopt a freeze on deployment of additional weapons.
- The Soviets would accept "substantial" reductions in strategic armaments, but only within the framework of the first two points.
- The reductions would be on the order of 1800 strategic nuclear delivery vehicles permitted by both sides. The limit would include missiles, bombers, and cruise missiles.

It is uncertain what will cause both sides to achieve an agreement. At present, the United States and Soviet Union are very far apart. Moreover, it is doubtful that the United States will be forthcoming until the necessary force modernization designed to insure survivability of United

States deployed strategic offensive weapons is well on the way towards completion.

Despite this skeptical outlook, it is important to note that both sides are at the negotiating table and a dialogue continues. As long as there is a mutual discussion of the issues, potential for a superpower confrontation which could in an escalatory sense get out of control, is considerably less than if there were no negotiations. A final point on START--as the sides entered into SALT II, there was great doubt that a comprehensive agreement could be achieved. Nevertheless, with persistence, an agreement was obtained. It appears that even a greater effort is necessary to achieve a START agreement--but it is clearly not beyond the realm of possibility.

## VI

Focusing on Europe, in the late 1970s, the Soviet Union initiated deployment of the SS-20 Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles (IRBM). This system represented a quantum leap in technology over the older SS-4/SS-5 IRBMs. The SS-20 is MIRVed (three warheads), mobile, and highly accurate. The majority of these systems are targeted on Western Europe. Needless to say, this is the basis of grave concern by our NATO allies. This concern was further exacerbated when the United States acknowledged in the mid-seventies that a strategic balance or essential equivalence existed between the United States and the Soviets in strategic offensive arms. This linked with the achievement of a SALT II Agreement in 1978 raised the fears on the part of many European leaders that the "superpowers" have put their strategic nuclear house in order and the United States might seriously consider decoupling its strategic umbrella--a fundamental part of NATO's defense.



With such concerns, the Europeans, under the leadership of the West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt adopted in December 1979 the NATO "dual decision." Essentially, NATO took the position that to offset the SS-20 threat, the United States would deploy theater nuclear systems, Pershing II and ground launched cruise missiles (GLCMs). This deployment reflected Schmidt's view that:

Western policy continues to center on maintaining a balance of military forces. The members of the alliance are faced with the urgent task of reestablishing the balance which the Soviet Union upset through its advance in two spheres: in the Third World and through the rapid development of a new nuclear medium-range capability for which there is no adequate counterbalance on the Western side.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to the deployment, the United States would enter into bilateral arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union. The purpose of the negotiations would be to address theater nuclear weapons (Pershing IIs, GLCMs, SS-20s, SS-4s and SS-5s). These negotiations are currently ongoing and are known as the Intermediate Nuclear Force (INF) talks.

In November 1981, President Reagan outlined the United States proposal to cancel deployment of Pershing II and GLCMs (planned deployment of approximately 570 systems) if the Soviet Union would dismantle all of its SS-20s, SS-4s, and SS-5s IRBMs. This is known as the "zero zero option." The thrust of the proposal is to eliminate an entire category of weapons systems. This in turn would reduce the threat to Western Europe and enhance regional stability.

The Soviets willingly came to the negotiating table to discuss what they perceive to be a major problem--the Pershing II deployment. Their objective to stop United States deployment has been clear. However, they have been intransigent on the dismantling of their systems. They contend that as long as the French and British have weapon systems capable of

striking targets on Soviet territory, they have the right to continue deployment of SS-20s. Despite their point of view, it should be noted that in addition to the 248 older SS-4 and SS-5 IRBMs, the Soviets have deployed 330 mobile SS-20s.<sup>15</sup> There is no question that this far exceeds their defense needs when their deployments are compared to the 160 British and French systems. Moreover, Soviets have continued their SS-20 deployment.

In the fall of 1982, Andropov proposed that the Soviet Union would scale down their SS-20 deployment to 160 missiles. In return, Andropov also proposed the non-deployment of US systems. However, this proposal had several inequities and was soundly rejected by NATO. Britain and France claimed that the negotiation was bilateral and the United States had no authority to negotiate on their behalf. Other NATO nations rejected the proposal on the basis that the Soviets did not formally propose the dismantling of the excess SS-20s. The SS-20s are mobile IRBMs. Those moved to eastern USSR could, in a crisis situation, be moved back into the European theater. Finally the SS-20 is MIRVed. If warheads are counted, the Andropov proposal would leave the Soviets with a three to one advantage.

In addition to being intransigent in the negotiations, the Soviets have also launched a major disinformation campaign. This has spurned the Western European peace movement and caused great concern in Western European governments. Moreover, inflammatory Soviet rhetoric such as proclaiming a potential launch on warning policy tends to heighten the fears of many Western European citizens.

Despite what appears to be a very poor situation, the INF talks have the potential for success in the next one or two years. It is the opinion of the author that with the United States deployment of Pershings and GLCMs in late 1983, the Soviet Union will begin to seriously negotiate. President Reagan in early April 1983, gave an opening to the Soviets by suggesting

that the United States is not inflexible with respect to the zero option. It is quite possible that an accord could be reached which permits equal amounts of warheads on both sides and which may also take into account British and French warheads. However, it must be emphasized that the suggested outcome is highly speculative and only a personal opinion.

## VII

There are many skeptics of arms control. The case can be made that the arms control record is dismal at best. The United States never ratified SALT II, the Soviets continue the massive buildup of its nuclear arsenal, the United States-Soviet relations continue to decline, current arms control efforts are mired down in polemics, the threat of nuclear war has never been greater than today.

Despite this gloomy outlook, arms control has contributed towards a more stable world--clearly more stable than a world without an arms control effort. What is important is that arms control is viewed with the proper perspective. START, INF etc., are not an end in themselves. Rather, they are an integral part of the multifaceted relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Michael Mandelbaum best summarized the value of arms control in a recent article in the Naval War College Review:

. . . arms control will remain in essence a form of diplomacy, a way of advancing mutual interests by states whose basic interests conflict. The principal interest that the United States and the Soviet Union have in common is the avoidance of war with each other. They must cooperate, if only tacitly, at least to this extent. Arms control provides a measure of mutual reassurance by serving as a symbol of the possibility of cooperation. This is, to be sure, a very modest contribution to nuclear peace. Arms control agreements do not address the basic causes of conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. They do not encompass the issues over which, on the whole, formal agreement is not possible.<sup>16</sup>

#### ENDNOTES

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